

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	Scoil Choilm Community NS
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Porterstown Road Clonsilla Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20241K

Date of inspection: 20-09-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating leadership and management, school planning and self-evaluation, and support for pupils, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of leadership and management
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum, which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-School Evaluation

Date of inspection	20-09-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and senior management team• Meeting with the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Review of relevant documents <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to teachers• Feedback to parent representatives• Feedback to board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Choilm Community National School is a multi-denominational school in Dublin 15 under the patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The teaching staff comprises an administrative principal and deputy principal, thirty-three mainstream class teachers, twenty support teachers and two teachers who teach in the special classes for pupils with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The school was established in 2007 and participates in Band 2 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. English is an additional language (EAL) for almost all of the 883 pupils enrolled in Scoil Choilm. While overall attendance rates are good, a significant number of pupils are absent for more than twenty days each year. The school makes great efforts to promote attendance and to make parents aware of the importance of regular school attendance.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of leadership and management at all levels is outstanding and the school is led by a principal whose strong and purposeful leadership has been central to its success.
- School planning is of an extremely high standard; it underpins the smooth running of the school, helps to improve the quality of teaching and learning and bring about the achievement of the DEIS targets.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some exemplary practice observed; in the main, pupils could be challenged more in their learning.
- The quality of learning is good with pupils making good progress; pupils are not always active participants in their own learning.
- Summative assessment is the main form of assessment used by the teachers, which is not sufficiently balanced by ongoing, formative assessment for learning.
- The quality of support for pupils is very good with some exemplary practice observed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should extend the variety of methodologies used to include more active learning opportunities for pupils, and more EAL-specific methodologies.
- The school needs to further develop its practices around formative assessment in order to determine the next steps in pupils' learning more accurately.
- Teachers should consider further ways of providing more challenging learning experiences for pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management at all levels of the school is outstanding. The board of management operates in a highly effective manner. The principal provides strong and purposeful leadership which has been central to the success of the school. She espouses a clear vision and a strong personal commitment to providing high standards. She is supported by a team of dedicated leaders who foster a learning culture in the school and who strive for excellence by setting high expectations for themselves and for pupils by promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Extremely effective structures and processes have been established to respond to change and to the evolving needs of the school.
- The management of resources is very good. Staff members are deployed effectively, and their skills and abilities are used productively to meet pupils' learning, well-being and care needs. Responses to teacher questionnaires administered as part of this evaluation indicate that they know that their work is valued and that they have an important part to play in the school's development. The school is extremely well resourced and all classrooms and corridors provide bright, clean, safe and stimulating learning environments. The building is maintained to an exceptionally high standard.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good. The parents' association is enthusiastic and active, and works diligently to support the school. Very effective communication strategies are in place to inform and support parents regarding their children's education. The Action Team Partnership assists parents of international newcomer backgrounds to access information about the school and helps the school to communicate with the wider school community. Responses to questionnaires administered to parents as part of this evaluation are overwhelmingly positive regarding their satisfaction with the school and how it operates.
- The quality of management of pupils is highly commendable. Pupils are polite and courteous and are welcoming of visitors. They are highly motivated and work cooperatively with staff. They play a role in aspects of decision-making through the activities of the students' council, the Green Schools' committee and the Young Interpreters' group. Responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate that pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life.
- The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

2. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- School planning is of an extremely good standard and staff and management are to be highly commended on the professionalism and the meticulousness with which they plan. A range of regularly updated administrative, organisational and strategic plans underpins the smooth running of the school.
- Staff members engage collaboratively in the school self-evaluation process with the explicit purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning and bringing about achievement of the DEIS targets. Rigorous strategies are in place for evaluating the impact of the school's actions on standards, on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievements to ensure continuous school improvement.
- Teachers prepare detailed classroom planning which is informed by the school plan and which is firmly rooted in the Primary School Curriculum. In order to enhance this planning further, greater consideration should be given to specifying the learning experiences of pupils and to clarifying how learning will be assessed.

3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some exemplary practice observed. Teaching is vibrant and stimulating and there is a very good focus on the teaching of language across all subjects of the curriculum. Lessons are well organised and well-paced, and teachers give clear instructions and explanations. Classroom routines are very well established. Resources for teaching are appropriate and accessible and are used effectively. Where exemplary practice was observed, the teachers exhibited very high levels of pedagogical content knowledge and effective consolidation of learning was strongly in evidence. Generally, however, there is an overdependence on teacher-talk and teacher-led lessons and there is a need to increase the pupils' autonomy as learners. Teachers should extend the variety of methodologies used to include more active learning opportunities for pupils. They should also extend their questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking further. The quality of learning is good, with pupils making good progress as they move through the school, particularly in their language learning. They are attentive and highly motivated learners. Questionnaire responses indicate that almost all pupils enjoy their learning. Their learning experiences have scope to be extended further in terms of challenge, however, with more emphasis on pupil-led learning, collaboration and creativity.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in English is commendable. Pupils' reading skills are developed systematically through the use of a range of novels and graded reading texts. Pupils are exposed to a variety of poetry. A whole-school approach to developing writing is employed to ensure that pupils can write effectively in a variety of genres. More sustained oral work before writing will ensure even greater success in writing. Oral language development is approached in a thematic way and is built upon incrementally as pupils progress from class to class. Teachers are to be commended for their high levels of engagement with the Primary Language Curriculum. In order to enhance literacy provision, it is recommended that the development of phonological and phonemic awareness be further considered in the context of EAL learners and that more EAL-specific methodologies be used to complement the work already being done.

- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Tá dearcadh dearfa ag an bhfoireann agus ag na daltaí i leith na teanga. Cuirtear béim ar mhúineadh abairtí chomh maith le múineadh foclóra a bhaineann leis an téama atá idir lámha don tseachtain. Baintear úsáid fhiúntach as an nGaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil ar fud na scoile. Tugann na taispeántais sna seomraí ranga tacú chun spriocanna an churaclaim a bhaint amach. I ranganna áirithe, d'fhéadfaí struchtúr níos fearr a chur ar cheachtanna agus níos mó béime a chur ar an bhfoghraíocht sa labhairt agus, go háirithe, sa léitheoireacht.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good. The staff and pupils have a positive attitude to the language. Emphasis is placed on teaching sentences as well as on teaching vocabulary associated with the theme of the week. Informal Irish is used effectively throughout the school. Classroom displays support the achievement of curriculum objectives. In some classes, lessons could be better structured and more emphasis could be placed on pronunciation in speaking, and particularly in reading.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is commendable. Most lessons begin with a good focus on oral work. There is systematic teaching of the language of Mathematics and pupils are provided with a very good grounding in a range of mathematical concepts. They are particularly competent in the area of *Number*. All classrooms provide maths-rich environments. Given that many pupils are achieving well in Mathematics, and indeed some are achieving very well, the school should consider employing a greater range of teaching methodologies. This would provide a wider variety of learner experiences for pupils and opportunities for them to explain, justify and discuss strategies and approaches while engaging in authentic problem-solving activities and simultaneously generating opportunities for creativity and language learning.
- Provision for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is of a very high quality. The programme is central to the school's ethos and permeates the everyday life of the school. It reflects and celebrates the pupils' cultures and traditions and fosters an appreciation of diversity. Initiatives such as anti-bullying and anti-racism are implemented regularly. Restorative practices are used to help in conflict resolution. The atmosphere throughout the school is positive, uplifting and affirming. Delivery of the SPHE curriculum is entirely appropriate although there is scope to engage the pupils more fully in their learning experiences through the use of more participative methodologies.
- Appropriate provision is made for assessment. Written work is monitored regularly and there is a consistent whole-school approach to providing supportive feedback. Teachers maintain useful records of pupil progress. Summative assessment is the main form of assessment used. However, the teachers need to assess the pupils' learning more closely at a formative level in order to determine the next steps in their learning more accurately. In this regard, the school should further develop its practices around formative assessment.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The quality of support for pupils is very good, with some exemplary practice observed in the delivery of support for pupils with special educational needs. Supports are targeted and are based on the effective use of assessment data. Planning is of a very high quality and target-setting is very good, overall. Where exemplary practice was observed it was characterised by excellently planned programmes of work with clear, measurable and relevant targets which were based on careful analysis of assessment. Support is based on a strengths-based model and there is a good balance between in-class and withdrawal. It is important that all in-class interventions are informed by robust assessment and that their impact is constantly monitored and assessed.
- Provision observed for pupils with ASD was of a very high standard. A large group of dedicated special needs assistants facilitates the inclusion of pupils with additional needs in classrooms.
- The school community provides a warm and caring atmosphere which serves to create a nurturing and supportive environment for all pupils. School procedures and practices promote and celebrate inclusion, equality and harmony. Pupils in need of additional supports are assisted through the work of the Home School Community Liaison programme and a range of in-school and after-school services.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and staff welcomes the feedback and recommendations in relation to the whole school evaluation of Scoil Choilm CNS. We feel that the report is fair and reflects the dedication of all parties to the progression of our school and most importantly to the educational and holistic development of the pupils.

As a school we are delighted with the outcomes of the WSE. We feel that the acknowledgement on behalf of the Inspectors to the dedication of our Board of Management, Staff and Parents' Association is commendable.

In terms of the Quality of School Leadership and Management we are delighted that the school is deemed 'outstanding' in terms of leadership and management at all levels. We are also delighted that the Inspectors have 'highly commended', the school's management of pupils. We are grateful that the Inspectors recognise that the children are highly motivated and work co-operatively with staff.

In relation to the Quality of School Planning and School Self-Evaluation, we are gratified to see that the school is highly commended on their 'professionalism and meticulousness with which they plan' for teaching and learning. We feel that the affirmation in terms of achieving our DEIS targets is reflective of the diligence of staff in ensuring high standards of education and a commitment to school improvement within our school.

Regarding the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement in our school, we note from the report that the quality of teaching was described as 'good, with some exemplary practice observed'. We look forward to further collaboration among staff and sharing of some of these exemplary practices. We are particularly pleased to see that the 'quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement' in both English and Mathematics are described as commendable. We are also delighted that the inspectors acknowledge the provision for Social Personal and Health Education is of a very high quality and that the school is both respectful of pupils' cultures and traditions and celebrates the rich diversity of our school community.

We are so proud that the Quality of Supports for our Pupils is so highly commended particularly for our pupils with special educational needs. We are happy to see that the level of supports for pupils with special educational needs is seen as 'very good with some exemplary practices.

Based on the feedback, recommendations and advice, we look forward to further developing standards within our school to enhance the education of our pupils and the smooth running of the school.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

In relation to the recommendations the school will work towards developing the following areas:

- *Extending the variety of methodologies used to include more active learning opportunities for pupils, and more EAL-specific methodologies. We hope to do this by:*
 - *A whole school emphasis on active learning as a methodology across all areas of the Primary School Curriculum*
 - *Ensuring that the children are more active participants in their own learning through involving them on ways in which they can approach new content*
 - *More collaborative learning using group and pair work where the children problem-solve and have more opportunities to discuss, clarify and evaluate their learning*
 - *More play- based activities and learning, particularly in the younger classes*
 - *More pupil-led drama and role-play to develop concepts, social skills and language.*
 - *A whole-school approach to daily and focused instruction for phonological awareness will be implemented. In the Junior School classes (Junior Infants – 2nd class) this approach will focus on recognising, generating and manipulating syllables, rhymes and phonemes in spoken words. In the Senior School classes (3rd – 6th class), instruction will progress to recognising and comparing sounds and patterns in spoken words in English, Irish and the students' home languages.*

- *The school will further develop its practices around formative assessment in order to determine the next steps of pupils' learning more accurately by:*
 - *Engaging in more detailed and higher order questioning to assess pupils' prior knowledge and learning.*
 - *The use throughout the school of KWL charts, concept mapping, rubrics and digital portfolios to help children assess their own learning and identify gaps in their understanding*
 - *Providing opportunities for conferencing sessions and collaborative discussions with the teacher and other pupils to progress learning*
 - *Recapping at the end of lessons and asking children to summarise their learning to form building blocks for further development. This will inform the teacher's future planning.*

- *Providing more challenging learning experiences for pupils by:*
 - *Extending pupils learning through encouraging problem solving, particularly in Mathematics both collaboratively and individually*
 - *Incorporating real life Mathematical problem-solving activities for a range of levels into our teaching, which will appropriately challenge all pupils, especially the children who are achieving well in this subject*
 - *Differentiating the pace and content of material taught for higher achieving students*
 - *Engaging in higher-order questioning to ensure that the children are given ample opportunity to explain, justify and discuss their ideas, opinions and outlook in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy*
 - *The use of team-teaching in Mathematics, to cater for the variety of levels within the class, thus challenging the higher achievers*

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;